

Policy Number: 5-4
Military Personnel Income
Effective/Revised Date: November 1, 2009

Military Personnel Income

Purpose

To ensure Local Agencies can determine eligibility of a military household.

Authority

7CFR Part 246.7

Policy

For WIC purposes, military personnel serving overseas or assigned to a military base, even though they are not living with their families, should be considered members of the economic unit. ~~The income received by the military individual(s) and all other income received by members of the economic unit shall be counted as income to the household. This includes the Basic Allowance for Subsistence (BAS) pay which is intended to provide meals for service members and is linked to the price of food.~~

~~**Note:** The BAQ housing allowance and FSSA are the only exception. This exclusion includes both off-base housing and payments for privatized on-base housing.~~

Guidelines

I. Income to be included

The income received by the military individual(s) and all other income received by members of the economic unit shall be counted as income to the household. This includes Basic Allowance for Subsistence (BAS) pay which is intended to provide meals for service members and is linked to the price of food.

II. Income to be excluded

- A. Military Combat Pay – Effective November 1, 2009 a provision enacted as part of the FY 2010 Agriculture Appropriations (P.L. 111-80): Military combat pay is to be excluded from WIC Income Eligibility determination.
- B. BAQ Housing Allowance – includes off-base housing and payments for privatized on-base housing.
- C. FSSA Payments – family subsistence supplemental allowances to low income military households whether they reside stateside or overseas.

III. Exception to Income Documentation

Income must be documented. However, some military families, particularly those which include military service personnel serving overseas, may have difficulty producing a pay stub or other documentation of the gross military income. In these

instances, the applicant may simply self-declare the family's military income to the best of his or her knowledge.

IV. Rate of Income

- A. If an active duty uniformed service member stationed in a designated high cost area is receiving either the CONUS or OCONUS COLAs, the amount must be included in determining WIC financial eligibility (see Federal Regulations 246.7(d)(2)).
- B. If a family includes one or more members stationed overseas or away from home, the military may determine that they may receive additional military compensation, e.g., hazardous duty or combat pay, family separation allowance, and/or foreign duty pay. Such pay is provided on a temporary basis; therefore, agencies may elect to consider the family income during the past 12 months as a more accurate indicator of the family's income.
- C. If one or more family members are military reservists who have been placed on active duty, some will experience dramatic changes in their income source(s) and total gross income so that they may become income eligible for the WIC Program. While the reservist is on active duty, determine such family's income eligibility based on the family's "current" rate of income, as opposed to income received over the past 12 months.

Note: Military Combat Pay, BAQ housing allowance and FSSA payments are exceptions to this policy.

V. In Temporary Care

- A. Local programs may be confronted with dramatic household composition changes for military family members in which military service personnel are deployed overseas, temporarily absent from the home and military dependents may be in the temporary care of friends or relatives.
- B. The most important rule to apply to all applicants, including minors, is that an economic unit must have its own source of income. Given this essential element, the local WIC program must then decide whether the income is adequate to sustain the economic unit.
 - 1. Count the absent parent(s) and the child(ren) as the economic unit.
 - 2. Count the children and/or remaining parent as a separate economic unit. The unit would have its own source of income (i.e., the dependent's allotment) and the determination would have to be made whether the income is adequate to sustain the economic unit. If the child allotments were not considered adequate (as defined by the State), option three would be used.
 - 3. Consider the children to be part of the economic unit of the person(s) with whom they are residing.